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letters to the editors

CIA protest

To the editors:

Several years ago, the American Association of University Professors passed at its national convention a resolution condemning covert intelligence activities on campuses by our government. Shortly after this, the Pace Pleasantville Faculty Council voted its endorsement of that resolution. These steps were taken in the wake of numerous disclosures of intrusion by the Central Intelligence Agency into university and scholarly life in the United States, including the presence of "operatives" at a sizeable number of colleges and universities. Presumably, these persons had the task of secretly recruiting those they deemed acceptable for intelligence jobs. But whether or not that was their only mission—and who could be sure in view of the long record of exposes of quasi-legal or illegal C.I.A. work—it was no less an institution than Harvard that passed strict guidelines designed to curb such operatives. They did so, it was explained, because they felt the whole clandestine nature of this network obviously tended to have a "chilling effect" on the free exchange of ideas so essential to the academic world.

Now, in the midst of the current pressure to "unleash" the Agency from congressional restrictions imposed after the scandals, we learn from the newspapers that they have already violated those controls! According to the *N.Y. Times*, (Sun., March 2), Admiral Stansfield Turner, C.I.A. Director, testified to a Senate committee that he had "in very limited

occasions" waived restrictions and authorized the use of journalists, teachers, and clergymen for covert missions in recent years. (Later, his Deputy issued a "clarification" to the effect that although authorized, the operations were never carried out.)

--We the undersigned faculty can only view with dismay these clear threats to our basic liberty in the name of protecting liberty.

--Further, we agree with the efforts of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence to pass charter legislation that would, according to the *Times*, prohibit use of the three above-mentioned professions for "covers." Also, the charter would require some congressmen to be briefed in advance of significant secret operations. Unfortunately but not surprisingly, the C.I.A. has expressed its opposition to these and other regulative measures—measures which are designed, in the words of Senator Byrd of West Virginia, to make them legally and not just informally accountable.

--Thus, we must express our deep regret that Pace has at this time chosen to honor Admiral Turner as spring commencement speaker at Pleasantville. And we hope that the important issues we have raised will be debated by each member of the Pace community, so that we all consult and act according to our consciences as citizens of a democracy and as people involved in democratic education.

Blanche Abramov, Assoc. Prof.,
Math/Computer Sc.

Daniel Farkas, Instructor,
Computer Sc.

Martin Kotler, Ass't, Prof.,
Math/Computer Sc.

Brian Pasby, Prof., Biology

Herbert Robb, Assoc. Prof.

of Education

Anthony Salotto, Prof.,
Chemistry

Billie-Jane Schwartz, Ass't, Prof.,
Nursing

Ernest Sherman, Ass't. Prof.,
Social Science

Ellen Weiser, Ass't. Prof.,
Chemistry